

News from France

by Jean-Marie Paul

Jean-Louis Petit, Composer

At Vandoren-Paris, we regularly organize concerts and lectures in a small room we have. This June, I was delighted to see there various composers, including Jean-Louis Petit. He accepted an invitation immediately to write about his works for *The Clarinet* which I have translated below.

But first, I must introduce the different aspects of Mr. Petit which have been described as "one of the mainstays (pillars) of French musical life" by the famous newspaper *Le Figaro*.

Jean-Louis Petit (b. 1937), composer, arranger, conductor, organist and harpsichordist, has been one of the major actors in music decentralization that is bringing to life music outside Paris.

- First from 1958 in Reims (Champagne region), then Picardy, with the Jean-Louis Petit chamber orchestra
- From 1972 to 2005 as director of the Ville d'Avray Conservatory, near Paris, he created the famous *Atelier Musique de Ville d'Avray*, a flexible ensemble that premiered many pieces.
- He created a series of international competitions: (2003 for clarinet), that continue (2008 for horn).
- As a conductor, he has appeared with many orchestras in the world, including the New York Philharmonic.

I recommend to clarinetists also that they play his *Variations on Carmen* and *Faust*, very difficult pieces premiered and recorded by Dominique Vidal, his favorite clarinet player. (Dominique was profes-

sor in Ville d'Avray and a member of the orchestra.) In these works J. L. Petit did not introduce his own style, but rather respected the style of the original composers and their time. These are very useful contributions to the repertory, because we do not have virtuoso variations on French operas (like Italians have with Bassi or Lovreglio for Verdi).

Another work that should be mentioned is a series of 33 unpublished small pedagogical pieces without opus number for clarinet and piano. They were written at different dates and grouped together two years ago for a proofreading by Guy Deplus, and an appropriate difficulty level was assigned by Dominique Vidal.

I was lucky to write clarinet pieces for prestigious players who premiered, recorded, and broadcast them. These include: Jacques Di Donato, Dominique Vidal, Jean-Max Dussert (professor at the Boulogne-Billancourt National Conservatory), Rocco Parisi, Arthur Campbell; and for ensembles like: Sextuor de clarinettes français, Quatuor Buffet Crampon, Trio à vent de Paris, Ensemble Galitzine (clarinetist Basile Bratos), Trio Lézard of Koblenz (Germany), Magic Quartett (Taiwan), Quatuor Edison (clarinet quartet : Jérôme Hilaire, etc.), Trio de Champagne with the clarinetist Gilles Clermont, ...

As a conductor, I was pleased to conduct rare works that I retranscribed from the National Library. I recorded with Michel Portal the Symphonie concertante by Bréval for Decca, and with Jacques Di Donato I programmed the Blasius concerto.

Of course the usual repertory of the clarinet has been a constant preoccu-

pation of my job as conductor. I worked mainly with Dominique Vidal on the Mozart Concerto (on the basset clarinet), the two Themes et variations of Rossini, the Mercadante or Weber concertos, ...

Guy Deplus, as a member of the Octuor de Paris, gave me precious technical advice for the premiere of my octet Fragments II.

So the clarinet is present in many of my works for ensembles, and, of course, in my works for symphony orchestra or band. I have exploited all its resources, and notably the "modes de jeu" that had a great impact on musical writing of the second part of the 20th century. I went back a bit on these considerations, because these new sounds often represent a smoke screen.

The label REM has published, under the title "La clarinette virtuose," the main works I wrote for Dominique Vidal, with band, strings, piano, or clarinet quartet. (At the time there was a Buffet-Crampon quartet that included Jean-Louis René, the artistic adviser at Vandoren.)

My taste for wind instruments, particularly reeds, does not come from the fact I practiced them (I am originally an organist, a wind instrument as we can consider the piano as a percussion instrument...). In many organ stops today there are clarinet or basset horn pipes, besides old stops like crumhorns or chalumeau pipes. It shows that organ manufacturing has evolved. Until a point, there were no saxophone pipes. This is also an instrument for which I composed many pieces.

Clarinet Works

In a catalog of more than 400 works, I counted 68 pieces with clarinet. Most of them are unpublished, unfortunately. A CD of clarinet pieces has been released that displays the various sides of the composer (bass clarinet & piano, clarinet quartet, clarinet & strings, etc.): *Appel* for clarinet and band, and *Sexus* for clarinet and strings, are vivid and vivacious, and like the other works here, tonal in a post-Stravinskian, neoclassical manner, only occasionally venturing into more dissonant territory.

His Web site <<http://jeanlouispetit.com>> has not been updated recently, so I checked with the composer directly. A *Trio des Quilles* with the same Mozart instrumentation (clarinet, viola and piano) was premiered in July 2008!

The composer can be contacted at: ajlpetit@jeanlouispetit.com.

For the availability of published scores, you can contact me directly: cjmpaul@vandoren.fr.

LA ENCORE, AVEC, op. 23, clarinet and piano, 1959

ARAMIS, op. 40, clarinet and piano, 1964
DEUX PIECES, op. 46, flute, violin, piano (and clarinet, cello), *Atelier Musique Ville d'Avray*, 1969

DEUX PIECES, op. 46, flute, violin, cello, piano, 1969 (1980 version, plus a clarinet becoming a quintet), *Atelier Musique Ville d'Avray*, 1969/1980

OCTUOR POUR GUERNESEY, op. 6 (Billaudot, 1986), 8 winds: fl/picc, ob, bass cl, bn, hn, 2 tp, tb, Ensemble Music Studio, 1972

DECONCERTO POUR UN SILENCE, op. 59, Nonet f. c. t. g. cl. pno. perc. vn. cello, 1976

DANS LA PENOMBRE EN FACE, op. 65, Quintet fl/cl/violin/cello/piano, 1978

HOMMAGE A MACHAUT, op. 61, fl. cl. vn. v. pno. (perc. ad lib), 1979

TROUVI SEMPRE A MO STRADA INDE A MACCHIA I, op. 85, Sextet: ob. cl. bsn. vn. va. cello, 1980

GRAFFITI I, op. 78, Wind quintet, 1981

TROUVI SEMPRE A MO STRADA INDE A MACCHIA II, op. 86, six clarinets, 1981

CLIMATS, op. 91b, clarinet alone, Dominique Vidal, 1982

FRAGMENTS 02, op. 93, cl, hn, bassoon, strings quintet, *Octuur de Paris* (G. Deplus, cl.), 1982

MUSIQUE POUR LES APPEAUX, op. 99, 10 instr.: fl. cl. 2 pnos, 5 strings, perc, 1982

LOUDEVICHE VANNE, DIT GROS LOULOU, op. 105, fl. cl. vn. cel. pno, 1984

LA CLE DE L'EAU, op. 89, Quintet: fl. cl. vn. cello. piano, 1985

FRAGMENTS 07, op. 115, 10 instr.: fl. cl. harp. clav. pno. 5 strings, 1986

MONOLOGUE/DIALOGUE, op. 117, 5 instr.: fl. cl. vn. cello. pno, 1986

FRAGMENTS 15, op. 134, clarinet alone, Dominique Vidal, 1987

ORION, op. 133, fl. cl. vln, piano, Ensemble Poikilon, 1987

SAQQARAH, op. 146a, clarinet, horn, piano, 1988

TROIS PRIVILEGES, op. 149, cl, vio-

lin, cello, piano, *Atelier Musique Ville d'Avray*, 1988

DE L'ARBRE DECOMPOSE, cl, violin, cello, piano, *Atelier Musique Ville d'Avray*, 1989

SÉQUENTIEL, op. 151, 4 clarinets, Quatuor Buffet-Crampon (Vidal, JLRené, C. Mercadier, E. Leclerc), 1989

CHANSONS MILANAISES, op. 146b, 5 instr.: fl. cl. vln. cello. piano, 1990

ECHO D'OMBRES FURTIVES, op. 156, clarinet and piano, Dominique Vidal and Sylvaine Billier, 1990

L'APPETIT DE LA GIROFLEE, op. 212, fl. cl. violin. cello. pno, 1990

LA CHRONOSPHERE, op. 164, (music tale) fl. cl. vn. cello. pno., 1990

OCTUOR, op. 153, fl. cl, guit, perc (clav), pno, string trio, Nuovi Spazi Sonori, 1990

SEPTUOR POUR PADOUE, op. 152, 7 instr.: fl. ob. cl. horn. guit. perc. pno, 1990

FRAGMENTS 09, op. 184, bass flute and basset horn, P. Bocquillon and D. Vidal, 1991

MODULE 1, bass clarinet and piano, Rocco Parisi, bass cl, 1991

SÉQUENCES POUR CLARINETTE ET SEXTUOR, op. 182, clarinet and strings sextet, Interensemble de Padoue (Italy), 1991

FRAGMENTS 13 (Homage to painter R. Pages), op. 194, fl. ob. cl. horn, vn. viola, cello, piano, 1992

LIMITE, op. 191, piano, violin, clarinet, 1992

CARNET DE BAL, op. 192, fl. cl. violin. cello. pno, 1993

SOUFFLE DE FEU, op. 202, clarinet and strings trio, D. Vidal and Trio Millière, 1993

SEXUS, op. 215, clarinet alone and 13 strings, Pierre Brousseau/Symphony N., 1994

BATEAUX-MOUCHES, op. 221, clarinet and band, *Musique des Gardiens de la paix*, 1995

ECLATS, op. 218a, fl. ob. cl. bsn. piano, 1995

MODULE 1, op. 220, (pub. IMD, Paris), bass clarinet alone, 1995

REGARD TRISMÉGISTE, op. 227, clarinet, violin, piano, Touchard (cl), Millière, Cottet, 1995

SOLIPSE I, op. 232, (publ. by ed. IMD, Paris, 2000), bass clarinet and piano, Rocco Parisi and Gabrielle Rota, 1995

SOLIPSE II (a), op. 233a, Reed trio, *Trio de Champagne*, 1995

SOLIPSE II (b), op. 233b, Reed trio, 1995
ECLATS II, op. 218b, fl. ob. cl. bsn horn po, 1997

FAUT-IL LE LAISSER SEUL PASSER SUR L'AUTRE RIVE ?, Op. 257, fl. cl. vln. cel. pno. perc, 1997

LES PARTICULES INGENUES, op. 250, Wind octet: 2 obs. 2 cls. 2 hns. 2 bns, 1997

APPEL, op. 258, clarinet and band, *Les Guides de Bruxelles, Musique de la Flotte*, Brest (D. Vidal, cl.), 1998

ATHANE, op. 267, cl. horn. bassoon and piano, 1998

CHAMPS IV, op. 266, harp. fl. cl. 5 strings, 1998

TOUT CIEL, op. 268, fl. ob. cl. bsn. vibra, 1998

TRILOGUE I, op. 260, flute, clarinet, violin, Grometto, Vidal, Milliere, 1998

CHAMPS V, op. 286, flute, clarinet, violin, Grometto, Vidal, Milliere, 1999

LE ROSSIGNOL EPERDU ou LE ROSSIGNOL VERT, op. 284, flute, clarinet, bassoon, *Trio à vent de Paris*, 1999

TOUT CIEL M'EST UN II, op. 280, Wind quintet, 1999

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SONATINE pour trois clarinettes, op. 311, 3 clarinets, 2001
 SOUFFLE III, op. 317, (publ. Combres, 2002), clarinet and piano, 2002
 TOMBEAU, op. 327 (homage to the composer Pierre Ancelin), fl. cl., vio., cel., pno, 2002
 APOCALYPSE 2003, op. 333, fl. cl. vln. cello, piano, 2003
 HORS-TEMPS, op. 344, 4 clarinets, 2003
 ...ET POURTANT..., op. 352, 2 clarinets and piano, 2004
 LES SAISONS sur les quatrains de G. de Scudéry, voice, clarinet, strings (3, 0, 1, 1, 1), 2004
 ROSSIGNOL EN SA DEMEURE, op. 353, voice and clarinet, 2004
 RETOUR (II), op. 367 (publ. Egge-Verlag, Germany), Reed Trio: oboe, clar., bassoon, Trio Lezard, 2006
 LE CIRCUIT DU GRAND FAÏT RUINEUX (Nostradamus), op. 394, 4 clarinets (E♭, B♭, F, B♭ bass), Quatuor Edison, 2007
 RARA AVIS (Grand Léopard), op. 396, heckelphone, bass cl., contrabass, 2007
 NOUVEAU TRIO DE QUILLES, op. 401 (refers to Mozart) clarinet, viola, piano, July 2008, Ensemble Galitzine, 2008
 33 PETITES PIÈCES PÉDAGOGIQUES, without opus number, clarinet & piano

Various Arrangements

Blasius, Matthieu-Frédéric (1758–1829), *Concerto pour clarinette*, orchestration Jean-Louis Petit, material at the composer's home
 Bréval, Jean-Baptiste (1753–1823), *Symphonie concertante pour clarinette, cor et basson*, op. 38
 Bizet/Petit, *Variations sur Carmen. Clarinette et Piano*, pub. I. M. D., 1996 (re-

corded, see below)

Gounod/Faust, *Variations sur Faust. Clarinette et Piano*, pub. I. M. D., 1994 (recorded, see below)

Schubert, *Menuet et allegro*, for wind octet (Deutsch 72), Billaudot, 1973

Discography

Most of the pieces with clarinet have been recorded by REM, a company which unfortunately does not exist anymore:

REM N° 311226 X CD, 1994: *Trouvée sempre a mo strada inde a Macchia, Sextuor de clarinettes de Paris*

REM N° 311278, 1996: *Regard Trismégiste*, Marie-Christine Millière, violon; Dominique Vidal, clarinet; Jean-Marie Cottet, piano

REM n° 311278 XCD, 1996: *De l'Arbre décomposé*, M. C. Millière, violon; Jacques Wiederker, cello; Josette Morata, piano; Dominique Vidal, clarinet

REM311334, 2000: *La clarinette virtuose*, Dominique Vidal, clar.; *Appel* for cl. & band; *Musique des Équipages de la flotte de Brest* (Marine Band), cond. Claude Kesmaecker; *Souffle de feu* for cl. & string trio (Trio Millière); *Solipse I* for clarinet & piano, Jean-Marie Cottet, pno; *Sexus* for clar. & strings (J. L. Petit Chamber orchestra); *Séquentiel* for clarinet quartet (with J.-L. René, F. Miquel, C. Mercadier); *Séquence* pour cl. & string sextet (*Sextuor Nord-Pas-de-Calais*).

For his *Variations on Carmen* and *Faust*: CD Quantum QM6944, 1993; *Fantaisies et Variations sur les Grands Aïres d'Opéra*, Dominique Vidal, cl.; Ichibō Takishima, piano

* * * * *



Jean-Louis Petit

Jacques Bondon (1927–2008)

The composer Jacques Bondon died on April 1. A former student of Koechlin and Milhaud at The Paris Conservatory, he composed more than 70 works, including five operas and the march for the 1968 Olympic Games in Grenoble. For clarinet, he composed two concertos, *Concerto d'Octobre* and *Concerto des Offrandes*, the second one dedicated to Jean-Marc Fessard (who recorded both on CD DUX 0397), *Movimenti* for four clarinets, *Les Folklores imaginaires* (wind quintet), a *Sonate a 6* (2 fl., 2 cl., 2 saxes), all published by Eschig, and a *Suite Fantaisie* for clarinet and string quartet at éditions Delatour, a young publisher who launched a clarinet collection managed by J.M. Fessard. For any additional information: <jm-paul@vandoren.fr>.

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